



**National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior**

## **DENALI NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE**



**Summer 2003  
Employee Handbook**

## **EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DENALI NATIONAL PARK!**

Congratulations and welcome to Alaska's Denali National Park and Preserve. We are glad you will be working with us and we hope you will enjoy it here.

This handbook is designed to provide you with basic information that will help you during your employment and make your time here pleasant and productive. Whether you are new to the area or the National Park Service, or returning for another summer season, you will need to read this handbook. Policies and regulations are frequently being updated, and it is up to you to become informed. Much of the information here may provide answers to the questions you may have, or will direct you to the right person for the answers.

Denali is one of the few remaining examples of pristine wilderness and contains a bio-diversity found in few other places. Created in 1917, Mount McKinley National Park was set aside by Congress to preserve wildlife in the shadow of Mount McKinley, which, at 20,320 feet is the highest mountain in North America. On December 2, 1980, President Carter signed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) adding additional acres of preserve to the park, increasing the park's size to over 6 million acres. The park was renamed "Denali National Park and Preserve". Our mission is to preserve unimpaired, the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations.

### **PARK ORGANIZATION**

Headquarters for Denali National Park & Preserve is 125 miles south of Fairbanks and 250 miles north of Anchorage. Denali's staff has over 100 permanent and term employees and close to 200 seasonal employees at peak season. The park is organized into nine divisions: Superintendent, Administration, Resource Management, Cultural Resources & Subsistence, Rangers, Interpretation, Concessions, Planning and Compliance, and Maintenance.



## GETTING HERE

**Driving:** If you are driving to the park, the Alaska Highway is a long and winding road. You will encounter short sections of road construction, but the bulk of the road is in fairly good condition. Feel free to call for route information and driving tips, or purchase an Alaska Milepost, a publication that tells you what sights and services you will find along the road from the US border through Canada and all of Alaska.

**Flying:** Fairbanks, 125 miles north, is the closest airport to Denali; Anchorage is 250 miles south. Ground transportation from Fairbanks or Anchorage leaves once a day, in the morning, so you will probably need accommodations for the night. Below is a list of possible transportation and rooms. If you have any further questions please contact your supervisor.

**Shuttle Services:** Parks Highway Express: phone 888-600-6001, website [www.alaskashuttle.com](http://www.alaskashuttle.com).

**Alaska Railroad:** Phone, 800-544-0552. website [www.alaskarailroad.com](http://www.alaskarailroad.com)

**Winter (Till May 11) Weekend service only.**

Saturdays Leave Anchorage 8:30am Arrive Denali 3:46pm

Sundays Leave Fairbanks 8:30am Arrive Denali 12:15pm

**Summer (May 11 – Sept 14) Daily Service**

Leave Anchorage 8:30am Arrive Denali 3:46pm

Leave Fairbanks 8:15am Arrive Denali 12:01pm



If you choose to take the train, your supervisor can assist you to arrange for a discounted ticket and transportation to headquarters and/or housing, about 2 miles from the railroad depot.

## Accommodations

Anchorage Youth Hostel: Phone 907/276-3635, Website [www.alaska.net/~hianch](http://www.alaska.net/~hianch)

Fairbanks Hostel: Phone 907/479-0099

Alaska Heritage Inn Youth Hostel: Phone 907/451-6587, Website [medicineman107@hotmail.com](mailto:medicineman107@hotmail.com).

## WHAT TO BRING

Denali summers are often cool and damp. Summer temperatures can vary from high 80's to below freezing. It can snow anytime.

### Essential items:

- Clothing for the great outdoors: Waterproof rain pants & jacket, and comfortable water-resistant hiking boots, 1 or 2 sweaters (wool or fleece), warm jacket (fleece-lined shell), windbreaker, wool or fleece hat, gloves or mittens, wool blend or polypropylene long underwear tops & bottoms (NOT cotton), wool or polypropylene socks.
- Some "summer" clothing: T-shirts, jeans, a pair of shorts, running shoes, cotton socks.
- Towel, pillow, sheets, blankets (or a sleeping bag), toiletries, mosquito repellent or head net.
- Original social security card or birth certificate and photo I.D. such as a driver's license OR your passport are required by a Human Resources officer to verify your citizenship.
- Valid driver's license!

### Optional, but highly recommended:

- Earplugs for light sleepers; battery operated alarm clock.
- Extra Footwear, gaiters to keep your pants dry, neoprene socks for stream crossings.
- Backpack, tent with rain fly, stove, cook kit, sleeping bag rated to 20°F, sleeping pad, water bottles, water filter, compass, daypack, and first aid kit.
- Binoculars, camera, lots of film (it's expensive here), books, shower shoes, etc.

### Optional, if you have the room

- Bicycle - nice for getting around the local area and seeing the park road. The Park Service has a limited number of bicycles available for shared employee use.
- Cookware - Basic cookware and utensils are provided in your cabin (see below). You may want to bring additional items such as measuring spoons & cups, a crock pot or coffee grinder.

## HOUSING



***C Camp Cabins***



For employees who live in park housing, rental rates of about \$50 to \$95 per biweekly pay period will be deducted from your paycheck.

Your supervisor will discuss the procedure to check into your housing unit before you arrive at park.

**Seasonal residents may NOT keep pets in the park.**

### **Headquarters Area (East End)**

If your duty station is Headquarters, you will be sharing a 15' x 20' cabin in C-Camp at mile 3 of the park road. Quarters are warm and dry, but are NOT plush. Cabins are furnished with propane heater, stove/oven, refrigerator, cupboards, table, chairs, electricity and two small bedrooms (each with built-in bed, desk, closet, and drawers).

Be aware that the cabins do have a kitchen sink, however, during part of your stay, there will be no running water to these sinks! This housing area was built by the CCC in 1938, typical Alaskan-style. Although a cold water system was added at a later date, the water piping is on top of the ground and subject to freezing. Once there are no freezing temperatures at night, cold running water will be turned on to the cabins. This usually occurs by mid-June, but can be later. Residents commonly haul drinking and cooking water from the shower house to their cabins from the time of their arrival until the water is turned on.

- **C-camp kitchens will be stocked with the following:**
- 4 each: dinner plates, bowls, cups, glasses, forks, knives, spoons
- 1 each: serving spoon, pancake turner, paring knife, butcher knife, sauce pan, frying pan, 9"X13" baking pan and a can opener

C-Camp has a central shower house with showers, toilets, washers and dryers. There is a separate recreation hall with television, VCR, pool table, ping-pong table, soda machine, book exchange, and a volleyball court.

C-Camp facilities are for employee use only. C-Camp will be especially full during training. Showers, washing machines, and the utility sink will be in constant use. **No guests** please, during this crowded period. After June 1, guests are permitted in C-Camp for short visits.



***C Camp Picnic Area with cabins in background***

## *C Camp Housing Area Accommodations*



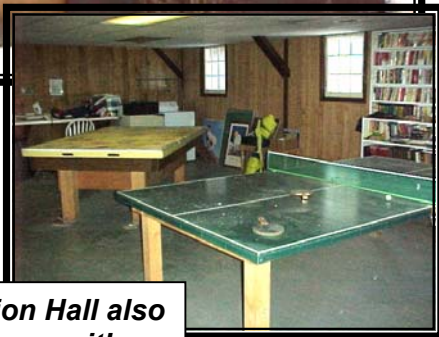
**Bedroom desk**



**Kitchen / Living Area**



**Shower House C-Camp**



**C-Camp Recreation Hall also  
has a relaxation area with  
satellite TV and VCR**



**Laundry**

### **Toklat (West End)**

If your duty station is Toklat or Eielson, you will be sharing a duplex at the Toklat Road Camp at Mile 52 on the park road. Quarters are warm and dry but are NOT plush. Cabins are furnished with propane heaters, stove/oven, refrigerator, sink with running water (by mid-May), cupboards, table, chairs, electricity and two bedrooms. You will share a common living area and enjoy the privacy of your own bedroom.

#### **Toklat kitchens will be stocked with the following:**

- 4 each: dinner plates, bowls, cups, glasses, forks, knives, spoons
- 1 each: serving spoon, pancake turner, paring knife, butcher knife, sauce pan, frying pan, 9"X13" cake pan and can opener

Toklat has a roomy shower house with showers, a bathtub, toilets, washers and dryers. There is also a smaller shower house without the bathtub. This shower house also has washers and dryers.

Toklat's Recreation Hall is outfitted with satellite television, VCR, paperback book exchange and common room, with a small set of free weights. There are large community freezers and refrigerators. Toklat facilities are for employee use only. During training, the West District staff will be housed at C-Camp near Headquarters. C-Camp will be especially full during training. Showers, washing machines, and the utility sink will be in constant use. Please, **no guests** during this crowded period.

### **Igloo and Sanctuary Ranger Cabins**

The Igloo and Sanctuary rangers will live in one-room historic cabins situated adjacent to the park road. These log cabins were constructed in the early 1930's by the Alaska Road Commission. These cabins are often used during the winter by park rangers performing dog sled patrols. The cabins are furnished with cookware and utensils, propane refrigerator, lights and cook stove. The heating stoves are wood at Sanctuary, oil at Igloo. Neither cabin has running water or indoor plumbing; however the views from the outhouses are something to write home about. Speaking of outhouses, you will be happy to know that the permafrost maintains a somewhat odor free environment and the use of Styrofoam seats keep your bottom comfortable!

### **Wonder Lake Ranger Station**

If you are duty stationed at Wonder Lake, you will occupy the newly renovated historical ranger station or a small cabin adjacent to the ranger cabin. The Wonder Lake complex is powered by a propane/solar/battery generator system and has a community shower house, laundry facilities and freezer space. All cabins have water and electricity. The view of Mount McKinley is spectacular!

#### **Kitchens will be stocked with the following:**

- 4 each: dinner plates, bowls, cups, glasses, forks, knives, spoons
- 1 each: serving spoon, pancake turner, paring knife, butcher knife, sauce pan, frying pan, 9"X13" cake pan and can opener



***C-Camp volleyball court  
(Use your imagination)***

## TRAVEL IN THE PARK

The park road begins at mile 237.8 George Parks Highway (Alaska #3) and ends 92 miles west. The first 15 miles of the road are paved and the remainder is gravel. Developments in the first 2 miles include the Post Office, Visitor Access Center, Mercantile, and train depot. At mile 3.5 are Park Headquarters, seasonal housing (C-Camp) and the sled dog kennels. Savage River check station is at mile 15. Private vehicle travel is restricted beyond the Savage River check station. If your duty station is beyond this point you will be issued a special road travel permit. Your supervisor will provide you with the details and training on "Rules of the Road." Beyond the check station is Toklat road camp at mile 53, Eielson Visitor center at mile 66 and Wonder Lake Ranger station at mile 85. There are several private lodges at the end of the road.



For recreational travel, our concessioner operates the **Visitor Transportation System**. Within that system are free shuttle buses from the Visitor Access Center to Savage River check station (mile 15). They are available for visitors and employees alike. Shuttle buses traversing the entire length of the park road originate at the Visitor Access Center and run from about 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. The last bus returns at approximately 11p.m. It is 11 hours round-trip to Wonder Lake. There are no services available along the road. Passengers may board or get off the bus at any point. This is not a free service, however, National Park Service offers an employee access program. See your supervisor for details.

## YOUR JOB

Seasonal employees at Denali serve in a wide variety of interesting positions. At the beginning of the season your supervisor will discuss your duties and responsibilities with you. You will receive written performance expectations and an outline of your training program. Throughout the season, your supervisor will provide you with feedback about your performance. If you have questions about your duties and responsibilities, never hesitate to raise those questions with your supervisor.

You are expected to be at your assigned workplace on time. Habitual or unwarranted tardiness or absence is charged to annual leave or AWOL (absence without approved leave) and may lead to disciplinary action.

Within approximately 30 days after your entrance on duty, you will receive a Standard Form 50 (Notification of Personnel Action) which shows you a variety of details about the type of appointment you were given. It is important for you to save these notifications for future verification of employment.

Temporary appointments are subject to separation at any time no matter what not-to-exceed date is specified on the Standard Form 50.

## UNIFORMS

As an employee of the National Park Service, you may be required to wear a uniform. Check with your supervisor. Uniformed employees receive an allowance to offset the cost of purchasing required items.



*Interpretive ranger giving Dog Demonstration*

## PAY

Salaries of General Schedule (GS) employees (i.e., Park Rangers, Interpreters, and Biological Science Technicians) are based on an annual rate by law. In Alaska, General Schedule employees receive an additional non-taxed cost of living allowance (COLA), which is currently set at 25% of the annual salary.

Federal Wage System (WG/WL/WS) employees receive hourly rates of pay based on a yearly survey of local wage rates and may vary in different parks and locations. Some temporary Federal Wage System employees are eligible to receive within-grade (step) increases for maintaining satisfactory work performance after serving waiting periods as follows:

From Step 1 to Step 2	26 calendar weeks
From Step 2 to Step 3	78 calendar weeks
From Step 3 to Step 4	104 calendar weeks
From Step 4 to Step 5	104 calendar weeks

Regular pay is based on an 8-hour day, 40-hour week. Your actual tour of duty (or work schedule) is based on park needs and is subject to change. A differential is paid for night or Sunday work.

## LEAVE

Annual leave is accrued for positions having a season of 90 days or more. You will accrue at a rate of four hours biweekly for those with less than three years of accumulated service; six hours biweekly for those over three years but less than 15 years of accumulated service; and eight hours biweekly for those over 15 years of accumulated service. Payment will be made for any unused annual leave. You should receive a lump sum check about five weeks after your employment ends.

Sick leave is earned at the rate of four hours biweekly regardless of the length of service. Unused sick leave is credited to your leave account, and is reinstated to you if you are ever re-employed by the Federal Government.

**Your supervisor must approve use of annual and sick leave.** In the case of annual leave, approval is governed by the needs of your office. In the case of sick leave, you should be aware of, and follow, the procedures in place for keeping your supervisor informed of your illness or condition while on sick leave.

## PAYCHECKS

Pay periods are biweekly and payday is the second Thursday of the pay period. You will work one pay period before being paid for that time. **You will not receive a paycheck until as much as four weeks from the time you enter on duty. Please plan your finances accordingly.** There are no provisions for a cash advance.

All paychecks are paid through direct deposit to your bank account. After receiving your first direct deposit paycheck, your checks should be automatically deposited every other week.

Federal Income Tax and Social Security (FICA) are deducted from your pay based on information you provide on your W4 form. Quarters rent is also deducted directly from your pay. Some times there is a delay and rent may not be immediately deducted, but will be deducted from a future check.

## LEAVE AND EARNING STATEMENT

You will receive a "Leave and Earnings Statement" each pay period recording your earnings and deductions. You should retain all copies of these documents. **It is your responsibility to check this carefully for errors in deductions and leave accruals.** If you are living in park housing, be sure rent is deducted, otherwise you could end up with a big bill at the end of the season! If you have a problem interpreting this statement, please consult your supervisor or the Human Resources office immediately.

## **ON THE JOB INJURIES**

Our goal is zero employee and visitor injuries. To accomplish this, we need to consider: "Safety First, Every Job, Every Time!" It is every employee's responsibility to work safely at all times. You will be provided training for your job, but make sure you have the information you need to do your job safely. If you have questions about doing your job safely, please be sure to ask your supervisor or contact the park Safety Manager.

As a Federal employee, the Federal Employees' Compensation Act entitles you to medical, surgical and hospital care at government expense if you are injured on the job. It is your responsibility to immediately notify your supervisor of even minor on-the-job injuries to insure that he/she documents it and medical treatment can be obtained.

Injuries and sickness that occur off the job (while in non-pay status) are treated at your expense. There is no government sponsored group health insurance for seasonal employees. There is an optional group plan available to seasonal employees through the Association of National Park Rangers.

## **ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES**

The Protection & Visitor Services Division provides law enforcement and emergency medical services park-wide. Any emergency or motor vehicle accident must be reported immediately. Motor vehicle accidents must also be reported to your supervisor if you are involved. In the field, contact Dispatch (radio call number "700"). Emergencies can be reported from any park phone by dialing 911 or extension 529. The park's business phone number is (907)-683-2294.

## **CONDUCT**

The booklet "Employee Responsibilities and Conduct" provides information on such topics as on-the-job conduct expectations, outside employment, selling or soliciting, use of government property (including computers), political activity, and soliciting or accepting gifts. This booklet is available via the Internet, or you may obtain a copy of the booklet from the Human Resources office. You are responsible for complying with these expectations, and should consult with your supervisor or the Human Resources office about any questions you may have concerning their application.

## **GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS**

Grievance procedures have been established to provide a means of employee relief when dissatisfaction arises concerning employment, working conditions, or working relationships among coworkers. Employees who have problems or grievances are expected to discuss them first with their immediate supervisor. If the problem cannot be satisfactorily resolved at this level, the matter may be reported to the next higher level of supervision or Division Chief. Final decisions on matters of seasonal employee dissatisfaction lie with the Superintendent.



## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

Denali National Park gives equal consideration in hiring practices, job opportunities, and promotion possibilities to all employees regardless of age, color, sex, handicap, national origin, political, religious, marital status, or other non-merit factors. Employees who perceive that they have been discriminated against based on the above are free to consult with an Equal Opportunity (EO) counselor for guidance and/or resolution of the complaint. Employees can find an EO counselor to help them by calling Regional EEO Manager Quinton Lee at 907-257-2698. Counseling is held in strict confidence, and employees are free from any reprisal in presenting complaints under this procedure.

## **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to all employees. This program provides counseling services for any concerns including, but not limited to emotional, marital, family, alcohol/drug use, job problems and legal/financial problems. This service is free and completely confidential. To use this service any time, day or night, just call 1-800-222-0364.

## **END OF SEASON SEPARATION**

Your immediate supervisor will complete an end-of-season performance evaluation. The evaluation will show whether your performance was satisfactory and you can be non-competitively considered for rehire, or not satisfactory, requiring you to compete with others for a seasonal position at Denali. Your evaluation can be used for future applications for federal or non-government employment or considered by prospective employers during reference contacts with your supervisor.

Upon termination, you will be given a copy of Standard Form 8, Notice to Federal Employees about Unemployment Compensation. Further information about your eligibility for unemployment compensation may be obtained from your local unemployment office.

Upon separation all government property must be returned. You will be billed for loss or damage due to negligence. The Buildings and Utilities Foreman will inspect your quarters for cleanliness, damage and accountable supplies before you leave.

Your official correspondence address will be used for forwarding your final pay statement and W2 forms unless you notify the Human Resources Office before leaving for the season.



## **LIVING AMONG WILDLIFE**

You will be living and working in wildlife country. Denali has a healthy population of moose, black bears and grizzly bears. Bears are extremely dangerous animals that can cause injury and death. It is imperative that food is stored properly, that cleanliness is maintained in and around park quarters and that you observe proper precautions while hiking. Never leave coolers, cans, or any food unattended outside your cabin. Moose are also extremely dangerous, especially cows with calves. Keep your distance and respect their space. You will receive information and training on wildlife encounters when you arrive.

## **PARK FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

The Visitor Access Center near the park entrance is a focal point for most park visitors. Services include shuttle bus arrangements, camping registration, backcountry permits, park orientation, and general information. Eielson Visitor Center, at mile 66 contains displays, information desk, and spectacular views of Mt. McKinley and the Alaska Range. At both visitor centers, the Alaska Natural History Association (ANHA), a non-profit private organization, sells educational books about the park.

Doyon/ARAMARK Joint Venture is the primary park concessioner. They operate the store at Riley Creek Campground, bus tours and the park shuttle system. Denali Air offers flightseeing tours over the park. Several private businesses offer food and lodging in the Kantishna area, located at the West End of the park.

## **POST OFFICE**

The post office is located near the park entrance. Surrounding communities also have postal services.

### **MAIL for Duty Station: Headquarters**

You can contact the local post office in advance (Postmaster, Denali Park, AK 99755 or 907-683-2291) for your personal post office box or make arrangements in person when you get to the park. You can ship packages to Denali prior to your arrival but please do NOT send anything to the park address or to Headquarters! Instead, send to the following:

Name  
General Delivery  
Denali Park, AK 99755



### **MAIL for Duty Station: Igloo, Sanctuary, Toklat, Eielson, Wonder Lake**

Do NOT send anything to Headquarters! Your address for the season is below. Your mail and packages will be forwarded to you at Toklat and points west.

Name  
P.O. Box 1194  
Denali Park, AK 99755

## **Phone Service and Internet availability**

Federal employees are allowed limited use of government phones and internet services. Use is limited to **use on personal time only**, and at no cost to the government. This means a personal calling card needs to be used for all telephone calls and use of the internet cannot disrupt park use, by using excessive bandwidth. Your supervisor will provide you with additional details.

Cell phone coverage is limited, due to the geography of the land and the few amount of cell phone service providers for the area.

## **Personal Voice Mail Boxes**

These can be set up for seasonal employees to receive personal phone messages from family and friends. Ask your supervisor for details.

## **GROCERIES**

Plan to buy a supply of food, dish soap, laundry detergent, house cleaning products and personal toiletries to last several weeks. You need to do this **PRIOR** to leaving Fairbanks or Anchorage. There are no stores along the highway. Most employees spend about \$250 at this stop. You will not need to buy toilet paper, it is provided.

During the summer, employees often carpool to Fairbanks for groceries, movies, and a taste of the "big city." Locally, there is a camper store across from the Visitors Access Center, a small grocery store just outside the park entrance and a small store in Healy. These are 7-11 type stores that carry necessities at a high price. The grocery store in Healy has a decent selection, including fresh produce, meat and dairy.

## **RECYCLING**

Denali is set up for recycling this year with a new recycle shed, cardboard baler and the ability to recycle more types of items like plastic and tin cans. We hope everyone joins in the effort to keep Denali moving forward to being a model for Environmental Leadership.

## **BANKING**

There are several ATM machines in the area, including Denali Princess Lodge and McKinley Chalets, lodges located just north of the park entrance, and in Healy, 13 miles north. Staff, SCAs & VIPs can cash stipend checks, personal checks and sometimes paychecks at the local outlet of the Alaska Natural History Association. If you use a debit card and make a purchase of \$500 or more at Riley Creek Mercantile, or the Park Mart, you can increase the amount you charge to receive up to \$50 cash over your purchase.

## **MEDICAL FACILITIES**

A small outpatient clinic is located in Healy. A physician's assistant and registered nurses staff the clinic. Complete medical and dental services are available in Fairbanks or Anchorage. Ambulance service is available in the park and in Healy.

## **LIBRARIES**

The small park library at Headquarters offers an excellent collection of Alaska-oriented materials, natural history books and magazines. A lending library is located at the Tri-Valley School in Healy. It is associated with the University of Alaska.

## **RELIGIOUS SERVICES**

A variety of worship services are available in Healy. These include but are not limited to Catholic, Baptist, Latter Day Saints, and non-denominational. Consult area phone directories for specific religious services.

## **EMPLOYEE ACTIVITIES**

Activities during the summer include hiking, backpacking, biking, camping, mountaineering, rafting, kayaking, and photography. Fishing is poor in the park but can be very good in other parts of the state. There are very few established trails and hiking can be difficult in the wilderness environment. Other recreational opportunities include TV/VCR, free movies, potluck suppers, dances, etc. Two major events are the Pygmy Tundra Buffalo Run (13 miles) and the annual End of Season party.

Denali has about 30 sled dogs that are used on backcountry winter patrols. A major part of our summer seasonal interpretive activity is the "dog demo", a 30-minute talk and demonstration run using historic equipment. The "Adopt A Dog" program allows seasonals to walk and care for a dog during the summer. See the kennels manager for details.

Park interpreters provide a variety of programs including guided walks, Discovery Hikes, talks at the campgrounds, and auditorium programs. For more information, check at the Visitor Access Center or the Alpenglöw, the park newspaper.

## **ANY OTHER QUESTIONS?**

You can get a sneak preview of the awesome possibilities for fun and adventure that Denali offers by visiting our website [www.nps.gov/dena](http://www.nps.gov/dena).

The website may also answer many of your questions. You may direct any other questions to us at (907) 683-2294. We are looking forward to working with you. Denali is a wonderful place. Plan to make this the best summer you have ever experienced.

